

The Past Future of Public Internet Access on Lasqueti

In March 2000 LIAS became an Industry Canada CAP site. This Community Access project has become known as the Lasqueti eCentre. Since its inception it has been funded by members, by grants from the Powell River regional district and by the federal *Community Access Program*. Most importantly, however, is that our eCentre has been subsidized by the Qualicum School District. The school district has, since 2000, for the rent of \$1.00 a year provided; the building, the heat, the power, the water (hot and cold), and free high-speed internet access.

In 2005-2006 LIAS expanded its role from running an eCentre to providing broadband coverage to the community at large. As broadband became more available to the community fewer and fewer Lasquetians were using the eCentre and LIAS broadband became a new funding source for the eCentre. In 2011-2012 the federal govt. ended its funding to CAP and LIAS attempted a reorganization of the eCentre with new volunteers and more funding from LIAS broadband. The volunteers who came together to “save” the eCentre have worked hard to try to make the eCentre work but usage and support of the eCentre is less and less.

Now, April 2013, the school district has informed LIAS that they can no longer afford to subsidize the eCentre. We now have an agreement in place for six months during which time LIAS will pay the school district @\$245.00 a month. LIAS broadband has thus become the major financial support of eCentre. LIAS will open the eCentre once a week on Wednesdays until the community can come together to create a new model for public internet access on Lasqueti. If the community has not come up with a plan by Sept. 2013, LIAS will close the eCentre.

The eCentre/LIAS own computers and a fax and photocopier and some other equipment. It will be up to the members of LIAS to decide what to do with the eCentre inventory if the community can not come together to create something anew. Even though the membership of LIAS is solely responsible for the eCentre we believe it is part of the Lasqueti Commons, it is everybody's eCentre.

LIAS will be having its AGM on May 8th, those of you interested in the eCentres future are invited to come to the AGM, time and venue will be posted. We suggest that Lasquetians interested in this get together before the May 8th meeting. For information contact ecentre@lias.ca.

LIAS